

Ser and estar can both be translated as "to be."

In English, the verb "to be" can be used to tell **how** something is (the condition) and **what** something is (the essence).

How is the apple?

It is unripe.

What color is the apple?

It is green.

In Spanish, a different verb is used to express "to be" depending on whether the speaker intends to address a condition or an essential quality.

La manzana está verde.

The apple is green. (condition)

La manzana es verde.

The apple is green. (essence)

To address condition, use *estar*. *Estar* is an irregular verb. It does not follow the standard rules of conjugation for regular -ar verbs. Therefore, you must memorize it.

Estar = estoy / estás / está / estamos / estáis /
están

To address an essential quality, use ser. Ser is also irregular and must be memorized.

Ser = soy / eres / es / somos / sois / son

If you are talking about **what** something is, use ser; if you are talking about **how** something is, use estar.

What is she like?

She is quiet.

Use ser:

Ella es callada.

How is she acting?

She is being quiet.

Use estar:

Ella está callada.